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ATHLETES FROM 20 COUNTRIES IN MAJOR REUNION AT HUNGARIAN OPEN INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS



The first pan-continental Modern Pentathlon competition in 12 months has attracted a world-class field of 132 athletes from 20 nations.

The elite gathering at the Hungarian Open Indoor Championships in Budapest (HUN) is a sure sign of the determination of the world's leading pentathletes to sharpen their skills in preparation for the resumption of Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification.

Six of the women ranked in the top 10 of the world rankings are present, including world No.1 Elodie Clouvel of France, while men's world champion Valentin Belaud (FRA) and world No.4 Marvin Dogue of Germany top the billing in the men's event. A strong Hungarian men's and women's contingent is bound to influence the outcome too.

The first competition that offers Olympic World Ranking points for Modern Pentathlon may still be four weeks away – UIPM 2021 Pentathlon World Cup Budapest also takes place in the Hungarian capital, from March 24-28 – but Hungary's national indoor competition has become an important

early form guide for many visiting nations.

Indeed, several athletes who have won the indoor season-opener have carried their form into the first Pentathlon World Cup of the year and claimed gold there, including Joanna Muir of Great Britain in 2020, Ahmed Elgendy of Egypt in 2019 and Bence Demeter (HUN) in 2017.

With athletes coming from as far and wide as Ecuador and Guatemala, the multilateral gathering is the first of its kind since UIPM 2020 Pentathlon World Cup Cairo, after which the entire UIPM Sports competition circuit ground to a halt due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic.

UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann said: "Our athletes and coaches have been living in a very difficult time for one year now. I'm very happy to see so many of them competing in the Hungarian Indoor competition in Budapest.

"This underlines their high motivation to invest time and energy in their training sessions, to be well prepared for international competitions in the new Olympic year 2021 for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Summer Games.

"I welcome them in the name of the UIPM Executive Board and wish them a successful competition in fairness and respect to each other.

"Thanks to our Hungarian National Federation, under the leadership of President Dr Gyula Bretz and his team, and thanks to the National Olympic Committee of Hungary and the City and National Governments for their support – including the volunteers and the media society.

"Let's all hope and wish that in the near future we can overcome the pandemic to have much better conditions for training and competitions. Keep healthy and follow all the guidance from your Governments and medical experts.

"The Olympic spirit is still alive."

Competition gets under way on Saturday, February 27 with the women's qualification, followed by the men's qualification a day later. The Women's Final follows on Monday with the Men's Final ending proceedings on Tuesday. Live stream is available at the competition website.